

Seventy-Eighth Oregon Legislative Assembly - 2015 Regular Session
STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY
Senate Committee On Health Care

MEASURE: SB 152 A
CARRIER: Sen. Shields

Fiscal: Has minimal fiscal impact
Revenue: No Revenue Impact

Action Date: 02/09/15
Action: Do Pass With Amendments. (Printed A-Eng.)
Meeting Dates: 02/09
Senate
Yeas: 3 - Kruse, Shields, Monnes Anderson
Exc: 2 - Knopp, Steiner Hayward

Prepared By: Zena Rockowitz, Committee Administrator

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Expands authority for practicing optometrists to prescribe Schedule II hydrocodone combination drugs. Declares emergency; effective upon passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Reauthorization to prescribe hydrocodone combination medications
- Hydrocodone was reclassified to a more restrictive drug class at the federal level in 2014
- Use of hydrocodone for ocular pain management
- Hydrocodone is most widely abused painkiller, but there have been no reported abuses by optometrists in Oregon

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT:

Adds emergency clause.

BACKGROUND:

Hydrocodone is a drug used to treat chronic or severe pain and also acts as an antitussive (cough suppressant). According to the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) hydrocodone is the most frequently prescribed opioid in the U.S. Effective October 2014, the DEA rescheduled hydrocodone combination products from a Schedule III controlled substance designating potential for drug abuse, to a Schedule II controlled substance designating high potential for abuse that may lead to severe psychological or physical dependence. Prescriptions for Schedule II substances must be handwritten and cannot be refilled, although the practitioner may issue multiple prescriptions for up to a 90-day supply.

Optometrists use hydrocodone for post-operative pain, treating eye injuries and infections, and removing foreign bodies from the eye. Presently Oregon (ORS 683.010) excludes optometrists from prescribing certain drugs including Schedule II drugs or pharmaceutical agents not on the optometric non-topical formulary. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, there are 12 states with laws that prohibit optometrists from prescribing Schedule II drugs, but make an exception for hydrocodone products.